



Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Methuen, MA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

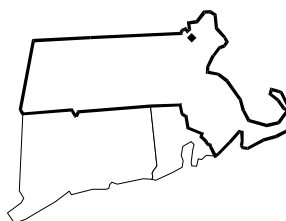
EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 150 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the Town of Methuen for a Brownfields Pilot. Methuen (population approximately 40,000) is a mix of farmland, suburban subdivisions, urban neighborhoods, and industrial businesses. In the mid- to late-1800s, mills along the Spicket River produced hats, shoes and textiles. Today, due to an industrial decline, Methuen has numerous vacant lots and underused historic buildings that could provide new jobs in an area where 33% of the residents—primarily ethnic minorities—live below the poverty level. Yet, despite the need for available space, the uncertainty of environmental contamination is an obstacle to economic redevelopment. The challenge of stimulating economic development in the town is magnified by the town's proximity to the City of Salem, New Hampshire which is a tax-free center.

Methuen has identified two general areas for brownfields cleanup and restoration—downtown and the Arlington neighborhood. The Pilot will target three abandoned properties within those areas: 1) Notini's Market, located in the Arlington neighborhood, is a 2.5-acre vacant supermarket, and prior to that was home to a chemical plant; 2) Methuen Mills was the home of a cotton mill until a fire in 1995 burned all the buildings on the half-acre site in the

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Methuen, Massachusetts

Date of Announcement:
May 1998

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets three vacant commercial and industrial brownfields sites, ranging from 0.25 to 40 acres in size.

Contacts:

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Visit the EPA Region 1 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region01/remed/brnflid/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

downtown area; and 3) the Garabedian site is a 40-acre site in downtown that was used as a car dealership in the 1950s. The stigma of potential environmental contamination at these sites, which are surrounded by Methuen's most impoverished neighborhoods, has posed financing obstacles for area banks that would otherwise be interested in redeveloping these properties.

OBJECTIVES

Methuen's objective is to expand and diversify the business and industry tax base while providing employment and services for its citizens. The Pilot will conduct Phase II environmental assessments at the three targeted properties. The Arlington Neighborhood is Methuen's most disadvantaged community, and will be targeted by the Pilot for an environmental justice initiative. In addition, there are several brownfields that the town is considering acquiring through tax foreclosure. The Pilot will assess these properties to help the town determine where best to direct its brownfields resources.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting Phase II environmental assessments at Notini's Market, Methuen Mills, and the Garabedian site;
- Conducting Phase I, and if necessary Phase II, environmental assessments at properties that the town is considering for tax foreclosure; and
- Conducting an Arlington Neighborhood Environmental Justice Initiative, consisting of community meetings to seek citizen input for the project and to describe the measures being considered.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.